



Arizona Game and Fish Department

Wildlife Matters

Legislative Monthly

August 2007

Volume V,
Issue 8



Agency Liaisons

Legislative Liaison

Tony Guiles:

602-789-3280

aguiles@azgfd.gov

Asst. Legislative Liaison

Ben Alteneder:

602-789-3533

balteneder@azgfd.gov

OUI Wolf Pack



Wolfpack Patrol on the Colorado River (Kingman). Aug 25th

Interested in attending??? Call 602-789-3280 - Tony

As part of an ongoing effort to make Arizona's waterways safer for everyone, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, in cooperation with other law enforcement agencies, will operate a checkpoint on the Colorado River near Kingman on August 25th.

All boat operators stopped will be checked for alcohol impairment and to make sure their watercraft are equipped with proper safety gear, such as life jackets and working fire extinguishers.

State law prohibits the operation of a motorized watercraft with a blood alcohol level of .08 or above.

"The Wolfpack is part of an ongoing effort to enforce the law, educate people and create a safer boating environment," says Kevin Bergersen, boating law administrator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Scholastic Clays

Scholastic Clay Target Program doing well.

Arizona teams turned in a strong performance at last weekend's Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Skeet and Sporting Clays National Championships in San Antonio, with eight squads finishing in the top three in the various age divisions—the best showing of any state.

Two Arizona teams won national titles. The Huachuca Hot Shots squad (Brisden Eaton of Sierra Vista, Brielle Eaton of Sierra Vista, Scott Usry of Hereford) took first place in the junior varsity division of the skeet championships, and the Ben Avery Clay Crushers squad (Paysen Unger of Phoenix, Dylan Karvanek of Anthem, Casey Coleman of Goodyear) topped the rookie division of the sporting clays championships.

Arizona squads also took three second-place and three third-place finishes in the various divisions.

California had the next-best showing, with three squads finishing in the top three.

"All of the Arizona squads performed exceptionally well," says Ashley Lynch, shooting sports coordinator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "Not only did all of our athletes contribute to bringing home the iron, they proved themselves to be great ambassadors for Arizona shooting sports. I could not be happier with the turnout from our volunteer coaches, parents and athletes."

The two-day competition, held July 14-15 at the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio, was the largest skeet and sporting clays championship in SCTP history. Nineteen states were represented among the nearly 400 shooters in varsity, junior varsity, intermediate and rookie divisions.

The championship featured some of America's best young



Casey Coleman of the Ben Avery Clay Crushers rookie squad goes for his target



Condors

talents. Some will be selected to attend an Olympic development camp next month in Colorado Springs; others will go on to compete at the collegiate level.

"Standout shooters are emerging all across the country. For example, in skeet, 15 competitors from seven different states shot championship rounds of 195 or better out of 200 targets. Remember, these are just high-school students, but some have already signed college letters of intent. We also had a national shotgun coach here this weekend to observe the event and the new, young talent," said Zach Snow of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), which coordinates SCTP nationally.

SCTP, for youths in grades 12 and under, has been called "the Little League of shooting sports." Nearly 10,000 students in more than 40 states competed in 2007 in trap, skeet and sporting clays.

Arizona's SCTP program just completed its third year. It is administered by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and conducted as a club-based program utilizing certified volunteer coaches. More than 600 youngsters from across the state competed in the 2006-7 season.

SCTP is managed nationally in partnership with numerous sponsors, agencies and organizations, including the national governing bodies of shotgun sports: Amateur Trapshooting Association, National Skeet Shooting Association and National Sporting Clays Association.

Arizona squads will get another crack at national titles when they compete in the SCTP national trap championships on Aug. 5-7 at the World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta, Ill.

For more information, visit www.azgfd.gov/shootingsports or www.nssf.org/sctp.

Endangered Condor Chicks Hatch in the Wild.

Biologists recently confirmed a new condor chick produced in the wild by captive-bred California condors at Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. They believe another chick is likely in the Grand Canyon.

This brings the total number of chicks hatched in the wilds of Arizona to six confirmed, and seven probable, since



1996, the year that endangered California condors were first reintroduced in northern Arizona as part of a cooperative recovery program by federal, state and private partners.

"This confirmed visual allows for a brief sigh of relief," said Chris Parish, the biologist leading the recovery effort for The Peregrine Fund, an international conservation organization. "The next big step, however, will be after the chick fledges and integrates into the wild flock. One step at a time."

The Peregrine Fund, based in Boise, Idaho, breeds and recovers endangered birds of prey around the world.

Two other condor pairs attempted to nest in Arizona this year, but were unsuccessful. California condors are typically six years or older the first time they attempt to breed, and pairs commonly do not succeed until they are eight years of age.



The Vermilion Cliffs chick is the second offspring for a pair of condors at the national monument. The chick was discovered by field biologists who observed nesting behavior in May. By early June biologists suspected a chick had hatched because the parents were venturing out to forage for food and immediately returning to the cave. After watching this behavior continue for three weeks, Peregrine Fund field manager Eddie Feltes rappelled down the face of the cliff and peeked inside the cave to confirm the presence of a healthy young bird.

The other chick that likely hatched this summer is the first for a pair nesting in a remote canyon within the Grand Canyon. That chick has not been confirmed with visual inspection, but scientists are optimistic, based on the parents' behavior.

"With each wild chick hatched, the original condor reintroduction concerns of whether the condor could even be successfully recovered have been answered," said Kathy Sullivan, lead biologist of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's condor program. "The program is making great strides. However, this chick and the entire flock face many challenges that must be overcome to achieve a self-sustaining population."

The greatest obstacle to a self-sustaining condor population is lead toxicity from spent ammunition. Cooperative efforts are underway to reduce mortality rates



from lead contamination in condors. The Arizona Game and Fish Department offers a free non-lead ammunition program, started in 2005, in an attempt to reduce lead exposure for wild condors. Hunters have responded positively to using non-lead ammunition in condor range, although expanded adoption of the effort is needed to further reduce lead exposure and mortality in condors.

The chicks are expected to fledge in December when they are about six months old. Four out of five of the previously wild-hatched chicks have survived and assimilated into the flock.

"These hatchlings are a significant step in recovering a magnificent bird," said Benjamin N. Tuggle, regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Wild-hatched condors are part of the plan for re-establishing a truly wild population of California condors."

Condors were added to the federal endangered species list in 1967. In 1982 there were only 22 California Condors in existence and in 1987 the last birds were removed from the wild for captive breeding to save the species from extinction. Today, more than 300 birds exist, with nearly half of those released to the wild in California, Mexico and at the Vermilion Cliffs in Arizona.

The condor is the largest flying land bird in North America. The birds can weigh up to 26 pounds and have a wingspan of up to 9 1/2 feet.

Condors were first reintroduced in Arizona in 1996. There are now 69 condors (59 wild and 10 awaiting release) in the state. Visitors at the Grand Canyon and Vermilion Cliffs may be able to observe the birds, especially during the spring and summer.

The condor reintroduction in Arizona is a joint project of many partners, including Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Peregrine Fund, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Kaibab National Forest and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

For more information on California Condors, visit The Peregrine Fund website at peregrinefund.org or the Arizona Game and Fish Department website at azgfd.gov/condor.



August Events



See our new Outdoor Calendar!!!
http://www.azgfd.gov/nrm/calendar_events.shtml

For additional information about *Wildlife Matters* Legislative Publication contact:

Ben Alteneder, Assistant Legislative Liaison
Arizona Game and Fish Department

602-789-3533

balteneder@azgfd.gov

Department Staff have contributed to this publication in the form of articles and photographs.

August 1, 2007



Wildlife Matters
Legislative Affairs